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BALT, SUN 5-18-74

KISSINGER ASKED FOR TAPS, NIXON REPORTEDLY TOLD DEAN

WASHINGTON (KNI)-PRESIDENT NIXON DIVULGED IN FEBRUARY, 1973, THAT HENRY A. KISSINGER, THE SECRETARY OF STATE, ASKED THAT WIRETAPS BE PLCED ON THE TELEPHONE LINES OF ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, ACCORDING TO A WHITE HOUSE TAPE RECORDING OBTAINED BY THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE.

DR. KISSINGER, WHO AT THE TIME WAS WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, DENIED UNDER OATH THAT HE HAD DONE SO IN TESTIMONY LAST FALL BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

THE PORTION OF THE TAPE RECORDING IN WHICH MR. NIXON MAKES THE ASSERTION WAS DELETED FROM WHITE HOUSE TRANSCRIPTS THE PRESIDENT MADE PUBLIC APRIL 30, BUT THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HAS THE ENTIRE TAPE AND HEARD IT THURSDAY NIGHT.

DISCUSSING DR. KISSINGER'S ROLE IN THE CONTROVERSIAL WIRETAPPING, MR. NIXON TOLD JOHN W. DEAN 3D, THEN HIS COUNSEL, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDING:

"I KNOW THAT HE ASKED THAT IT BE DONE, AND I ASSUMED THAT IT WAS."

THE PRESIDENT WENT ON TO REFER SPECIFICALLY TO WIRETAPS ON "LAKE AND HALPERIN"-ANTHONY LAKE AND MORTON HALPERIN, BOTH NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF MEMBERS IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION.

THE CONVERSATION ACCURRED FEBRUARY 28, 1973, JUST A FEW DAYS AFTER TIME MAGAZINE HAD BROKEN A STORY ASSERTING THAT A NEMBER OF NEWSMEN AND ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS HAD BEEN

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WIRETAPPED.
THE ADMINISTRATION AT FIRST VEHEMENTLY DENIED THE TAPS, BUT LATER ADMITTED THAT A TOTAL OF 17 TAPS HAD BEEN PLACED IN 1969 THROUGH 1971--13 ON ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AND 4 ON NEWSMEN--ALL SEEKING TO TRACE THE SOURCE OF LEAKS TO THE PRESS.
THE QUESTION OF DR. KISSINGER'S POSSIBLE ROLE IN ESTABLISHING THE TAPS BECAME A KEY ISSUE LAST SEPTEMBER IN HIS SENATE CONFIRMATION HEARINGS AFTER HE HAD BEEN APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE.

KISSINGER DESCRIPTION

IN AN EXECUTIVE SESSION BEFORE THE COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 17, THE TEXT OF WHICH WAS MADE PUBLIC IN OCTOBER, DR. KISSINGER DESCRIBED HIS ROLE:
"FIRST, I NEVER RECOMMENDED THE PRACTICE OF WIRETAPPING. I WAS AWARE OF IT, AND I WENT ALONG WITH IT TO THE EXTENT OF SUPPLYING THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAD HAD ACCESS TO THE SENSITIVE DOCUMENTS IN QUESTION.
"DESPITE SOME NEWSPAPER REPORTS, I NEVER RECOMMENDED IT, URGED IT OR TOOK IT ANYWHERE.
"INDEED, THE THOUGHT THAT I MIGHT BE IN A POSITION TO DO THIS IN THE FOURTH MONTH OF A NEW ADMINISTRATION WHICH I JOINED AS AN OUTSIDER IS IN ITSELF INCONCEIVABLE."
DR. KISSINGER'S REFERENCE TO "THE FOURTH MONTH" WAS A REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT THE WIRETAPPING PROGRAM BEGAN JUST A FEW MONTHS AFTER MR. NIXON TOOK OFFICE IN 1969.
IT STARTED IN MID-1969 AND WAS TERMINATED IN FEBRUARY, 1971, THE ADMINISTRATION EVENTUALLY ACKNOWLEDGED.
IN THE FEBRUARY 28, 1973, CONVERSATION DEAN AND MR. NIXON WERE DISCUSSING THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF BUGGING NEWSMEN AND DEAN MENTIONED THE TIME MAGAZINE STORY WHICH, HE TOLD MR. NIXON, "WE ARE STONEWALLING TOTALLY HERE."
"OH, ABSOLUTELY," THE PRESIDENT SAID.
"STONEWALLING" WAS A TERM USED FREQUENTLY IN THE WHITE HOUSE TO DESCRIBE A POLICY OF FLATLY DENYING STORIES ABOUT WATERGATE.
AT THIS POINT IN THE TRANSCRIPT MADE PUBLIC BY MR. NIXON APRIL 30 A PARENTHETIC NOTE APPEARS: "MATERIAL NOT RELATED TO PRESIDENTIAL ACTION DELETED."

THE TEXT

THE TEXT OF THE DELETED MATTER, OBTAINED BY THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE:
PRESIDENT: "SURE, AND THE ...HENRY'S STAFF...- HE INSISTED (UNINTELLIGIBLE) AFTER WORKING WITH MCGOVERN-UH, UH WORK MUSKIE. INCIDENTALLY DIDN'T MUSKIE DO ANYTHING BAD

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ON THERE ?.

PHENRY (UNINTELLIGIBLE) AT LEAST I KNOW NOT BECAUSE- I KNOW THAT I KNOW THAT HE ASKED THAT IT BE DONE. AND I ASSUMED THAT IT WAS. LAKE AND HALPERIN. THEY'RE BOTH BAD. BUT THE TAPS WERE TOO. THEY NEVER HELPED US. JUST GOBS AND GOBS OF MATERIAL: GOSSIP AND BULLSHITTING- THE TAPPING WAS VERY, VERY UNPRODUCTIVE THING. I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT. AT LEAST, I'VE NEVER, IT'S NEVER BEEN USEFUL IN ANY OPERATION I'VE EVER CONDUCTED."

MCGOVERN AND MUSKIE ARE SENATORS GEORGE MCGOVERN AND EDMUND S. MUSKIE, CONTENDERS FOR THE 1972 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION.

SEVERAL OTHER PARAGRAPHS ABOUT OTHER MATTERS WERE DELETED IN THE WHITE HOUSE TRANSCRIPTS BEFORE THE CONVERSATION RESUMED.

BY THE TIME OF DR. KISSINGER'S CONFIRMATION HEARINGS IN SEPTEMBER THE ADMINISTRATION HAD FULLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE SECRET WIRETAP PROGRAM WHICH IT HAD DENIED STRONGLY AT FIRST.
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